1952
Need for a state museums association first recognized and formally discussed.

1960
Move to organize a state-wide museums association continued.

1968
Third time is a charm! Formal workshops held including “Exhibits for Small Museums: Function, Planning, and Building.” These events will lead to the establishment of a formal association.

1972
May 24, 1972 see the official establishment of the Oklahoma Museums Association. It’s OMA’s birthday!

1976
OMA is officially recognized as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable nonprofit by the Internal Revenue Service.
We also hire our first coordinator through grant funds.

1994
Stacy O’Daniel joins OMA as the Administrative & Programs Associate.

2005
Brenda Grenger joins OMA as its sixth Executive Director.

2009
OMA begins tradition of attending annual AAM Advocacy Day in Washington to support Oklahoma museums on a federal level.

2010
OMA begins annual reception at national American Alliance of Museums conference.

2014
OMA partners with associations from Texas, Florida, Virginia, and California to develop a consortium of leading state museums associations working to impact the profession on a national level.

2017
OMA continues to plan and work for the future of all of Oklahoma’s 528 museums. It launch fulcrum by initiating a Community of Practice for small, rural, and isolated museums.

“The need for such an association... has long been recognized by leading minds in the state.”

Then on May 24, 1972, twenty years after the initial first meeting of interested individuals, the Oklahoma Museums Association was officially established and incorporated with the Oklahoma Secretary of State as a nonprofit organization. We consider this our real birthday!

According to the articles of incorporation, OMA was formed with the objective of promoting the welfare of museums and their advancement as educational institutions, as agencies of scientific research and as cultural centers; to foster continued improvement of the museum profession through the development and observance of high standards of ethics, conduct, education, and scholarly attainments; to increase and diffuse knowledge through meetings, reports, papers, discussions, publications and various media of publicity and communication; and to encourage cooperation among Oklahoma museums and those interested in them.

After incorporation, programming flourished and included starting a technical bulletin series as well as holding two meetings a year. The meeting agendas included a bus tour, cocktails, bar-b-que, music, mingling, short swap shop of ideas, and a quick annual meeting followed by lunch and another tour.

A few big milestones happened in 1976. First, OMA was recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3, tax exempt organization for educational and charitable purposes and Second, OMA hired its first coordinator thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to the Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council, which is now known as the Oklahoma Arts Council. The Oklahoma Arts Council is a tremendous supporter of OMA and has been a partner in our success since the beginning.

The Oklahoma Museums Association is the primary provider of training and technical information to staff, volunteers, board members and interested individuals for Oklahoma’s over 500+ museums, historic sites, tribal cultural centers, and historical societies.

Over four decades since our creation, OMA is proud to continue with its mission of supporting Oklahoma museums in their efforts to educate, inform, and entertain. The OMA staff and board work statewide with museums and cultural organizations, and has a national reputation as one of the most active museum associations in the country.

We continually strive to add and improve our programs and services so that we can better serve our Oklahoma museums.
The organizations that signed OMA’s articles of incorporation in 1974 are:
Northwestern State College Museum
Oklahoma Historical Society Division of Museums
University of Oklahoma Snowell Museum of Science and History
Canadian County Historical Society
Fort Washita Site
City of Ponca City
Eastern Oklahoma Historical Society
Institute of the Great Plains
Nowata County Historical Society
Connors State College Museum
Sed House Site

Since 2010, OMA has sent representatives to Washington, DC to advocate at a national level for issues important to Oklahoma Museums.

As of December 2017, OMA serves 528 museums, historical societies, and cultural centers in over 200 communities across all of Oklahoma’s 77 counties.

OMA is blessed with a gifted and dedicated staff. Stacy O’Daniel [left] has been with us since 1994 and is the Administrative & Program Associate. She keeps the OMA office running smoothly and makes our programs and events the “smartest” in all the land!

Brenda Granger [above] has served as OMA Executive Director since 2005 and has taken OMA’s championship of Oklahoma museums to a national level.

Beginning April 2018 OMA launches its inaugural Hondurask travel program with a trip to Athens and the Greek Isles. The program is designed to connect museum professionals and supporters through a love of travel in culturally-rich environments.

Brought together in 2014 at a “Museums United” workshop funded by IMLS, major museums associations from OK, TX, CA, VA, and FL saw an opportunity to connect and impact the museum profession on a national level. As an indirect result of their partnership, an IMLS funded grant, “Museums United – Phase 2” resulted in a new initiative, Coalition of State Museum Associations (COSMA), in which all state museum associations are working collaboratively under their auspices to develop critical tools and resources to help address strategic issues significant to the success and sustainability of American museums.

OMA receives support from its:
17 Corporate members
155 Individual members
144 Institutional members
430 Designated members
FOR A TOTAL OF 750 MEMBERS!

Annually, OMA organizes a fall conference that brings hundreds of museum professionals together from across the Sooner State. The three-day event offers educational workshops, professional development, networking, and FUN! The conference is held in a different city each year so that attendees can experience the cultural and artistic diversity of Oklahoma.

Since in inception in 1974, OMA has had only six directors.
Robin Tryloff
Alvin O. Turner
Donald Bridgewater
Carolyn Pool
Cherie Cook
Brenda Granger

Since 2010, OMA’s SMARTIES Trivia Night has been bringing together the best and brightest (well, more or less) in the Oklahoma museum world for a night of fun, fundraising, and frivolity to benefit the programs and services of OMA.